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First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton Speaks to Food Safety Educators

Speaking to more than 500 people in a packed auditorium here in Washington, D.C. this past June, Hillary Rodham Clinton called the gathering one of the most important events of the year for food safety educators. "You are here to work together, to form partnerships to try to make sure that food doesn't make people sick.... It doesn't get any more basic than that," she said.

Mrs. Clinton was addressing the first national conference devoted to exploring new strategies for educating consumers, called "Changing Strategies, Changing Behavior." The conference was co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The day-and-a-half-long meeting provided a platform for presenting new information on consumer attitudes and trends, epidemiological data, risk communications, social marketing and case studies.

■ Focusing on Food Safety Education

In addressing the attendees, Mrs. Clinton noted the President's food safety initiative that calls for increases in disease surveillance, research, inspection, coordination among government agencies and a full-scale public education campaign about foodborne illness.

Speaking of food safety education, Mrs. Clinton said, "We used to get a lot of this type of information in schools and had more awareness of safe food preparation because we saw food being prepared." Now, she said, many children "think food comes in a box. They don't have the day-to-day experience of handling food in the kitchen."



Educating Americans about how to handle food safely "is central to our success in the overall area of food safety."

"I hope we are up to this challenge," she said. "I often worry that issues like this get put on the back-burner unless there's an outbreak—a tragedy." We have to be vigilant, Mrs. Clinton said, to meet the challenges of living in a rapidly changing environment with newly identified pathogens and risks.

■ "Our hard-won-blessings"

At the same time, Mrs. Clinton pointed to the many benefits we tend to take for granted. Recalling a trip to Nepal, Mrs. Clinton recounted a meeting she had with a young Peace Corps volunteer. The young woman told Mrs. Clinton that one of her strongest impressions was of missing the things she had taken for granted—like safe food and water.

"I wish I could have taken every American with me on that trip," Mrs. Clinton said, so they could have seen through that volunteer's eyes the "value of our hard-won blessings...our food is safe." But that safety can't be taken for granted, she added. "We have to do what is required to make our food safe, so we can pass this way of life and these blessings on to our children." ●

inside

inside this issue:

This entire issue is devoted to the covering of the conference. Inside you'll find articles on:

- Consumers
- Pathogens
- Risk Communications
- Social Marketing
- Case Studies

THE CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

Attracting more than 500 people, the first national meeting of food safety educators required some re-working of plans to accommodate all the people who wanted to attend. As a result, charter buses were called into action to ferry participants from the planned hotel conference site to larger facilities at Georgetown University.

But for participants, there was a significant reward at the end of the ride: a packed program with presentations from national experts representing government, academia, consumer groups and industry. In addition to the appearance of First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, the conference also featured Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman and Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala.

Conference presentations shed light on pathogenic risks, consumer behaviors and techniques for influencing behaviors.

Numerous leaders stressed the importance of communicating clear, concise food safety messages the public will remember. At the same time, conference discussions highlighted the different approaches educators feel are needed and the difficulty of framing simple messages that will change behavior and are also scientifically accurate.

■ Conference Summary

Vicky Freimuth, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), summarized the conference on the final day noting that the conference had identified several challenges facing food safety educators.

It's clear, she said, that we are working in a dynamic and changing environment. This change is evidenced in a number of ways: Newly recognized pathogens are requiring new

solutions. International trade means that food safety problems are no longer confined by national boundaries. And, as conference experts noted, people are buying more ready-to-eat foods than ever before. As a result, supermarkets and processing practices are changing to keep pace.

Acknowledging the different points of view that surfaced during the conference regarding food safety messages, Freimuth challenged the educators to try to find consensus on key critical messages and how those messages should be delivered.

Relatedly, Freimuth suggested a change in approach as educators design food safety messages. "We have stressed the importance traditionally of having 'science-based' messages in terms of the pathogens, but we also need to have 'science-based' messages in terms of our audience," she said. Referring to the science of social marketing, Freimuth said "we need

to know what consumers want to know and what behavior practices they are willing to adopt."

Information alone, she added, won't result in behavior change. "It's easy to fall back on just giving out information. But don't do it.... Remember that communication in itself is not a magic bullet. It's not the only strategy for dealing with food safety. We've seen many instances where one message and one form of message delivery won't work for everyone," she said.

Finally, Freimuth, said, "I hope this conference will encourage you to think about how you can put these issues on your agendas at home." In spite of the complex issues facing the educators, Freimuth said her final challenge to the group was to remember a quote from the film "Schindler's List" used by a previous speaker: "A person who saves a single life saves the entire world." ●

"We have stressed the importance traditionally of having 'science-based' messages in terms of pathogens, but we also need to have 'science-based' messages in terms of our audience."

Vicky Freimuth, CDC

Conference proceedings will be mailed to all conference participants later this fall. Others who are interested in the proceedings should fax their request in with their name and address to 202/720-9063.

Focus on: Consumers

■ FDA Consumer Research

According to Alan Levy, chief of the FDA consumer studies branch, a striking disconnect exists between consumer concerns and consumer behavior when it comes to safe food handling.

Between 1988 and 1993, research shows consumers seemed to be increasingly concerned about food safety, but at the same time unsafe food handling practices have increased.

Levy suggested a number of reasons for this “disconnect.” For the past 30 years, he said, a dominant theme has been that we have the safest food supply in the world. Consumers have internalized this message and believe that problems can be fixed by government controls and not by personal behavior. People think that food safety failures occur in processing plants and restaurants and not in their own homes or due to their own actions.

In addition, Levy said that focus group work concerning the dangers of *vibrio vulnificus* and the consumption of raw oysters revealed that people were knowledgeable about the risks, considered themselves as “experts” and felt they knew how to control the risks. Similarly, FDA focus group testing of food

safety advisories for use in restaurants revealed that people had a negative reaction to the consumer warning. Their response, Levy said, was “we know and don’t want to be reminded.”

While people are in fact fairly knowledgeable about food safety issues, he said, they also have serious misconceptions about foodborne illness and its consequences. “To the extent that people don’t see this as a serious problem, they won’t feel an urgency to change their behavior,” he said.

One way to break through, Levy suggested, is to give people a better picture of the magnitude of food safety problems and challenge people’s understanding of themselves as experts. Levy said that new data from the FoodNet surveillance system launched in 1995 by USDA, CDC and FDA may be “the best way to challenge people’s understanding of themselves as experts.”

Levy also noted that a new FDA consumer survey is being conducted this summer and will shed light on how consumer attitudes and behaviors may have changed following the 1993 *E. coli* 0157:H7 outbreak. Results from the survey should be available this coming winter and will be posted on the FDA homepage: <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/list.html>. ●

■ Insights From Consumer Groups

Education Is Only One Component

Carolyn Smith DeWaal, of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, told the educators “you need to know that consumers are part of the solution, but not the whole solution.... While thorough cooking helps, consumers can’t fix *E. coli* on lettuce or *salmonella* on alfalfa sprouts.” She encouraged the educators to avoid implying that consumers had somehow “failed.” The “blaming-the-victim approach is not only inappropriate, but will turn consumers off,” she said. “Consumers can’t prevent all cases of food poisoning.”

Pointing out that 46 percent of food dollars are spent on restaurant meals and other foods away from home, she said it’s not enough for educators to communicate with consumers about food safety in the kitchen. You need, she said, to focus on food safety from farm to table, and to control pathogens earlier in the food chain.

Communication about safe food handling needs to be presented in a direct and entertaining way. “Don’t forget ‘KIS’—keep it simple.” Be honest about the foods or behaviors that are risky, and get the message out, she added. Finally, she reminded, “Consumer education is only one component of a modern food safety system—never a substitute for a safer food supply.”

What Consumers Want...

Behind every food poisoning statistic, said Nancy Donley, is a face, a story, a life. Donley brought one of those faces to life as she sketched the details of her son’s life and painful death from *E. coli* 0157:H7.

Donley lost her only child, Alex, “all because contaminated cattle feces lurked in the hamburger in what should have been the safest of environments—his own home.” Donley encouraged the educators not to use the brown/grey color of hamburger as an indicator of safety.

She commended USDA for recently changing its position and advising consumers to rely only on a meat thermometer, not visual signs of doneness.

Referring to *E. coli* 0157:H7, she said, “you cannot educate this evil pathogen away. A simple microbe of *E. coli* is all it takes. The emphasis must be on prevention. Education is simply trying to catch the cows after they have escaped the barn.”

Consumers can and should accept responsibility, she added, but they need to know what they are dealing with and they need the information in clear, no-nonsense language. In answering the question of ‘what do consumers want,’ Donley said she had given the conference attendees the 10-minute answer. “Now I’ll give you the two-word answer—the truth.” ●

■ Insights From Industry

Partnership for Food Safety Education—"We want to be part of the solution."

Industry involvement in the Partnership for Food Safety Education came about because "the private sector has a vested interest in public health. We want to be part of the solution to the foodborne illness problem," said Sara Lilygren, of the American Meat Institute.

The Partnership, which was announced last May, has pledged itself to a consumer education campaign slated to be released in mid-September. With \$500,000 in funding from six industry groups, the Partnership has contracted with a major public relations firm to develop the campaign.

The Partnership is broad-based, however. Government agencies, consumer groups and public health organizations have signed on to work cooperatively and help disseminate campaign materials.

"Why is industry involved?" Lilygren asked. "We've seen the value of training our employees...and it's really working." Continuing this type of education with consumers, Lilygren said, was a natural extension. ●

Food Marketing Institute—"Change" Is Key as Consumers Eat Out

We eat out as much as we eat in, according to Michael Sansolo of the Food Marketing Institute. These staggering changes, he said, change the way people eat and change issues in terms of food safety.

The Food Marketing Institute represents grocery stores and also conducts studies in consumer behavior and buying patterns. Those studies have shown that grocery stores are no longer a growth industry because meal times have changed. Increasingly, supermarkets are competing with restaurants. McDonald's, Sansolo pointed out, serves approximately 7 percent of the population every day.

"We remember the time when grandma used to take two hours to prepare a meal. Now it's more likely to take 15 minutes. And for the new generation coming along, even 15 minutes is too much," he said. "If they don't want to cook, how are we going to educate them about safe cooking?" he asked. "This is going to be tough," he said, but food safety education needs to change to keep pace with this reality. ●

■ Food Safety Messages for Consumers

"If you had only a few seconds to provide food safety information to someone, what is the most critical information you can give?" asked Susan Conley, director of the FSIS food safety education and communications staff.

Conley pointed out that there is myriad food safety advice out there. "We need," she said, "to cut through all the advice and get back to basic, critical messages."

In determining these messages, Conley pointed out that experience in dealing with callers to the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline has shown that consumers will call seeking information regarding one type of food—and then call again seeking similar information on another type of food. "They don't always get the principles that could relate to other foods or situations," she said.

To help identify the basic messages and principles of safe food handling, food safety educators from government, industry and consumer groups met this past spring to brainstorm the critical steps in consumer food preparation. The steps were then compiled into a list and sent to key experts in food safety education and microbiology to rank as to their importance. From a risk-assessment standpoint, the experts' review clearly identified four primary concepts:

- Personal hygiene—handwashing.
- Cross-contamination—prevent contact between raw and cooked product.
- Cook foods thoroughly—pay attention to time and temperature.
- Refrigerate cooked food promptly.

"These are old, basic messages," Conley said, "but they need a new face, a new attitude.... Just because people are informed and aware does not mean they will act on the information."

Recasting these messages, Conley said, is part of the mission of the new public/private partnership being launched by the Partnership for Food Safety Education. In addition, Conley encouraged the educators to stay current on consumer research and new communication tools by signing up for the new e-mail network: EdNet. ●

Check Out EdNet: New Federally Sponsored Electronic Network Linking Food Safety Educators. To sign up, send your name, email address and phone number by email to: R.Douglas@Bangate.FDA.gov. Please be sure to state whether your interest is primarily consumer/health or retail/food service education. Or, call Robyn Brown Douglas at 202/205-2857.

Focus on: Risk Communication

Consultant Peter M. Sandman has worked with a variety of groups on risk communications. Applying lessons learned in those situations to food safety, Sandman said the key is this: "The risks that kill people and the risks that upset people are completely different. The correlation between harm and upset is very, very low. The question is why?"

Communication experts used to feel this was because they just weren't presenting the public with enough information. But it's not that people need more information, Sandman said. And it's not that they can't understand risk data. The problem

is, he says, that communication experts are not addressing the public's sense of outrage.

Experts deal well with explaining the hazards involved; they don't deal at all with the outrage component. Outrage, he said, is tied to control. "We will tolerate risks we choose, but not risks we don't choose," he added. According to Sandman, outrage is real, manageable and as important as hazard.

"First figure out WHY the outrage is high and then you can figure out what you can do to get public outrage down. Only then can you go on and try to educate people about the hazards," he said.

■ Lowering Outrage:

Some of Sandman's strategies for lowering outrage include:

- Stake out the middle rather than the extreme. When trying to reassure the public, work hard not to understate the risks.
- Acknowledge prior mistakes. "I'm not saying," he said, "to admit legal liability, but you need to acknowledge that you are taking moral responsibility."
- Acknowledge current problems. You don't get credit for the success unless you announce your problems before you solve them, he said.
- Don't lie about the reasons for making changes—and give away credit whenever possible.

- Share control. People feel safer driving themselves than being driven by others, Sandman pointed out. "If you want me to feel safer, the solution is to give me more control." ●

■ Increasing Outrage:

In terms of alerting people to risks and increasing their concern, Sandman said there are a number of reasons why people reject this type of information.

Sometimes people feel outraged at what they consider to be "over-protection." When you tell people to take precautions, he said, sometimes you just make them mad. You need to share control, get people involved in the solutions and give them options. Let people choose, he suggested, between actions that might be characterized as extremely safe, moderately safe, or somewhat risky. Given those options, he

said, people will usually choose a moderately safe action.

There are also times when people reject information because by protecting themselves, they remind themselves of the risks. "They would rather not think about it," he said.

When outrage is not present, Sandman said, people will convince themselves that they are not at risk. "We look for reasons why we are not at risk. You need to know what story we are telling ourselves about why we are not at risk. People may feel they are the experts on their lives and the risks they are willing to take. You need to acknowledge that," he said.

"You need to know WHY people aren't protecting themselves before you can talk them into it. The reason is almost never that they don't know the facts." ●

Focus on Pathogens

"I want to emphasize how much foodborne disease has changed," said Dr. Fred Angulo of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This change, Dr. Angulo said, is linked to a number of issues including newly recognized pathogens, newly identified vehicles and routes of transmission and newly recognized consequences including Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS). In addition, Dr. Angulo pointed out that foodborne illness outbreaks now reflect our complex production network and may be multi-state or international in scope.

"Consumer education," he cautioned, "is vital, but will not in itself eliminate foodborne disease." Dr. Angulo stressed the need for better data to assess prevention techniques. Much of that data, he said, will be coming from the new FoodNet sentinel site surveillance system started in 1995 by USDA, FDA and CDC.

At the same time, data from FoodNet will also help educators identify consumer behaviors and risks, according to Peggy Nunnery, FSIS's director of the food hazard surveillance division. Recent population data from FoodNet surveyed over 13,000 people from five States on their behaviors at home and when eating out. The data shed light on consumer behavior and knowledge in a number of areas including handwashing, awareness of the safe handling label, food handling practices and eating preferences. As data is collected over time, it will help identify which behaviors and/or foods may increase risks of foodborne illness.

In another session, Dr. Phillip Tarr of Seattle Children's Hospital added insights concerning *E. coli* 0157:H7. Looking at *E. coli* statistics for King County since 1971, he said, "you see that the disease is not out of control, but it's not getting better either." Dr. Tarr estimates that 90 percent of HUS cases are caused by *E. coli* 0157:H7. Like Dr. Angulo, Dr. Tarr underscored the need for better national surveillance. ●

ocus on: Social Marketing

The Overview

According to Sharyn Sutton of American University, social marketing is the application of advertising and marketing principles to social initiatives in order to achieve goals through

behavior change. “You focus on the desired behavior change and then identify what attitude and knowledge you need to get to that behavior change,” she said.

A common fault of public health programs, she explained, is to rely solely on clinical and epidemiologic research as the basis for messages. This reliance leads to messages that present “the facts” about a specific health behavior, on the assumption that exposure to these facts will lead to the desired behavior.

Social marketing, through a process Sutton terms “consumer-based health communications” (CHC), transforms scientific recommendations into message strategies that are relevant to the consumer. The core of CHC is consumer research to understand the consumers’ reality. Information can be drawn from quantitative data—such as data bases—and qualitative data—interviews with individuals.

The goal of the research is to answer six strategic questions:

- Who is the target audience? There is no such thing, said Sutton, as “the public.” You need to define the audience as specifically as possible. “You need,” she said, “to be talking to a real person.”
- What is the desired action? This should be the consumer’s behavior and action—not the public health goal. Also look at, what does this action replace? “We want you to do X” she explained, “instead of Y.”
- What is the “promise”? What reward is involved? “This needs to be something that the individual cares about. It is totally subjective and not the reward to the public at large,” Sutton said.
- What support can be provided? What role models can demonstrate the behavior and help the consumer master the new behavior?
- What is the right time and vehicle for delivering this message? When will the consumer be open to it? Do you use mass media or target flyers to a specific group? Would one-on-one interactions be more effective?

- What is a persuasive image? You need to have the appropriate messenger and make sure consumers feel you are talking to them specifically—that they can see themselves performing the new action.

■ Social Marketing at Work

The conference’s social marketing team, as part of their presentation, took on the task of teaching safe food handling during summer cookouts. The weekend before the conference, team members interviewed and video-taped picnickers in a local park. A ten-minute composite of those interviews was shown to the conference attendees, providing “real life” feedback on the “target audience.”

As the interviewers wandered through the park with their video camera, they talked to older people, young people, couples, and mothers. They had a lot to say about safe food handling:

“I’m not at risk ‘cause I know the grocery store I shop at.”

“The key is having a real hot flame—then you know it’s going to be okay.”

“I try to bring separate utensils and plates to handle raw and cooked foods—you know, there’s no water to wash things with here. Then I use a bit of alcohol to clean my hands.”

In response to questions about using meat thermometers, many people dismissed the idea as not practical, not necessary. But the picnickers’ negative reaction to using a meat thermometer didn’t discourage the social marketing team.

Instead, as part of their conference presentation, they brainstormed what they had learned about their audience to try to get them to take the desired action.

To further define their audience—and their message—they identified men as their target audience. (Demographic data showed that men frequently cook out.)

The problem, suggested one panelist, may not be the message, but making the action easy. “What is the ‘cost’ to the consumer if he were to adopt this behavior?” One possible cost they identified was that others “might think I don’t know what I’m doing if I used a thermometer.”

“If the image of a guy using a meat thermometer is one of not being a ‘real guy,’ how can we re-position that image?” one panelist asked.

Their solutions included using a high-tech meat thermometer with “guy appeal” or encouraging a thermometer cook-off competition. While the solutions were “spur of the moment,” they demonstrated the variety of potential approaches. The social marketers showed that just because an idea is a tough-sell, doesn’t mean it is a no-sell.

In closing, Craig Lefebvre, of Prospect Associates, reminded the audience about the importance of pre-testing ideas. “It’s a constant process of going back to the consumer,” he said. “You can do 20 interviews, you don’t need to do nationwide focus group testing.

“You don’t need to have it all picture perfect before you move. Pick a few simple things that can at least move the process forward. A key is that the outcome must be relevant to the consumer. And while the marketing process is data driven, sometimes we need to go by the seat of our pants and learn from our experiences. Don’t wait to get everything perfect, because you’re risking lives in the meantime.”

For more information contact:

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Tampa, FL 33613
phone: 813/971-2119

Case Studies

The second day of the conference provided an opportunity to focus on food safety education projects that demonstrated unique alliances and unusual approaches.

■ Georgia Department of Health:

During the 1988 holiday season, a single Georgia hospital reported 15 cases of bloody diarrhea among children traced to *yersinia* from chitterlings preparations. Flyers with alerts were distributed, but outbreaks continued.

In August of 1996, Dr. Ann Peterson of the health department took on the problem with two new objectives: find out why the outbreaks were still occurring and design an intervention to prevent outbreaks before the next holiday season.

Dr. Peterson's investigation assessed how chitterlings were prepared, how babies became sick and identified a behavior within the community that had the potential to reduce illness—pre-boiling the chitterlings for five minutes.

This behavior became the recommended action in the subsequent information campaign. They used a variety of means to get the information out, including a briefing with religious leaders who then passed the word to their congregations.

The result? Once the campaign got underway, outbreaks declined.

Dr. Peterson's recommendations:

- Use formative research
- Talk to the community—"Our best idea came from the audience we were talking to."
- Address the audiences' issues—"what are their concerns?"

- Think about the gatekeepers early. Plan for them as you would plan for your target audience, she suggests.

For more information, contact Dr. Ann Peterson, 770/488-7773.

■ Allegheny County Health Department:

"Brownie the Burger" hit the streets in May 1996 with his slogan "If I'm pink in the middle, I'm cooked too little."

Mike Diskin, project coordinator for the Pennsylvania county health department, noted USDA's new position recommending no longer using "brown" as a sign of "doneness" and recommending the use of a meat thermometer. Research has shown that some brown ground beef can actually be undercooked.

At the same time, Diskin feels the Allegheny County campaign has made a difference.

Diskin said they began the campaign because of concerns about the connection between

E. coli 0157:H7 and HUS in children. As a result, in addition to conducting the campaign, they also made *E. coli* 0157:H7 a reportable disease.

The county's campaign took Brownie the Burger everywhere with his food safety message: to schools, day care centers, fairs and parades. In addition, they had a more comprehensive message for parents, including the recommendation to use a meat thermometer.

With support from the business community, including the grocery chain Giant Eagle, the campaign promoted a coloring contest that attracted 5,000 entries. A local company donated ten billboards that aired the Brownie the

Burger message and buses along major routes carried posters. By mid-summer, the program moved into day care centers with a song for kids ("If it's pink in the middle, say no way!") and detailed food safety information for providers.

Some of the campaign's results: Awareness of the campaign among children was 77 percent, parents 81 percent. Sixty-two percent of parents reported a behavior change.

For kids, 94 percent said they won't eat a burger with pink in the middle.

Finally, Diskin noted, since the campaign began, there have been no confirmed cases of HUS for kids in Allegheny County, even with mandatory reporting.

For more information, call Mike Diskin, 412/578-7933.

■ Giant Food Stores:

Donna Mathews, consumer advisor for Giant Food Stores, described the chain's efforts to teach consumers about food safety.

Giant has been active for years in providing consumer information. Mathews noted that of all the actions they have taken, they found TV and radio spots—especially radio—to be the most effective. Their consumer information program includes signs and brochures in the stores, a food safety column that runs with newspaper ads and information on grocery bags. All the information runs under the slogan, "Be a safe food handler."

Mathews suggested that information needs to be simple, actionable and repeated frequently.

From the food chain's viewpoint, teaching consumers about food safety is another way of increasing consumer trust and, ultimately, sales.

For more information, call 301/341-4365.

■ Oregon State University:

Project director Carolyn Raab described an innovative effort to reach out to foodbank recipients with food safety messages. Their unique approach: put food safety messages on common household items. A sponge promoted "clean," a magnet "cool," and a potholder "cook thoroughly."

Raab reported mixed results in terms of recall and behavior change. Part of the problem was that some of the target audience were in fact unemployed food handlers. "They felt they already knew the information," she said.

Raab reported that it was also difficult to find the right people to discuss the messages with the audience. The foodbank volunteers—who gave out the household items—did not always see themselves as "educators." Were she to do the campaign again, these are two areas she would re-assess. For more information, call 514/737-1019.

■ The Chef and the Child Foundation:

The philanthropic arm of the American Culinary Foundation, the Chef and the Child Foundation (CCF) provides consumer education through more than 300 chapters nationwide.

CCF director Pat Thibodeau reported on a recent cooperative project with USDA: developing a food safety coloring book for kids. More than 30,000 have been distributed to date.

Encouraging educators to work with CCF, Thibodeau noted that "we are your natural partners. We are your feet; we are your grassroots in the community."

Chefs, she explained, were eager to go out into their communities and teach food safety. "You'll find our chefs doing presentations to kids in schools, day care centers, food pantries, and hospitals," she said. While we work with children, she said, we also work with the organizations, letting them know that we'd be glad to provide consultations on food safety and sanitation issues.

CCF has also developed a safe food handling training program for foodservice workers in foodbanks that is available for a nominal charge. To date, they have distributed more than 10,000 workbooks and videos and provided training in more than 40 cities. For more information, call 904/824-4468.

■ Orlando District Public Affairs (FDA):

Lynne Isaacs reported on a new teaching kit on *vibrio vulnificus*, a serious problem in Florida. In fact, Isaacs noted, the illness had caused two deaths in the past five weeks.

Isaacs reported that work with focus groups was useful in developing the new materials. Many people with liver disease, for instance, didn't know they were vulnerable.

For a copy of the kit, call Project Director Clara Lawhead at 813/869-3900, ext. 120.

■ Consumer Information Center:

Mary Levy from the Consumer Information Center (CIC) briefed conference participants on a special CIC program to encourage the Federal Government and private concerns to publish jointly.

She reported on a recent partnership project initiated by Laura Fox, from the FSIS food safety and consumer education staff. The project resulted in a partnership teaming FSIS and Lysol in producing a publication about food safety and sanitation in the kitchen. (The cooperative partnership requires the publication to be free of advertising and not copyrighted.)

To date, said Levy, 130 publications have been published cooperatively. When you joint-publish, Levy said, the publication is mentioned in the CIC catalog, which goes to more than 16 million people nationwide.

For more information on CIC, Levy suggested educators check the award-winning site on the web at: www.pueblo/gsa.gov. For information on cooperative partnerships, call 202/501-1794.

USDA's Food Safety and Consumer Education Staff

F•S•E

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